

WASHINGTON

MERRY-GO-ROUND



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WASHINGTON -- A confidential House memo accuses the FBI and CIA of "a serious suppression of evidence which was vital to this country's investigation" of the John F. Kennedy assassination.

The House assassinations subcommittee "has uncovered a

good deal of information which suggests that Lee Harvey Oswald was associated with one or both of these organizations," the memo reports.

It charges bluntly "that both the CIA and FBI intentionally withheld relevant information from the Warren Commission and, in at least one instance, provided the Commission with information known to be false."

Specifically, the memo accuses the FBI of withholding 23 Oswald files from the commission. The FBI "was in possession of 69 pre-assassination files on Lee Harvey Oswald," states the memo. "However, of these files, only 46 were turned over to the commission."

The information that allegedly was withheld was contradictory. On the one hand, the CIA suppressed facts suggesting that Cuba's Fidel Castro may have retaliated against President Kennedy after learning about the CIA's plot against his own life. But on the other hand, the CIA allegedly covered up evidence linking Oswald to CIA-sponsored, anti-Castro Cubans.

The House memo, which was not intended for publication, draws no conclusion about the Kennedy killing. But it lays out the evidence that the committee has gathered thus far. Here are the highlights:

— The CIA did not disclose to the Warren Commission that it had been trying to knock off Fidel Castro at the time Kennedy was shot. Killers from the Havana underworld, controlled by mobster Santos Trafficante, were used in the plot against the Cuban premier. The mobster who directed the attempt on Castro's life, John Roselli, hinted privately that the same killers had been caught by Castro and had been turned against Kennedy. Interestingly enough, a

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Cuban exile, according to the memo, quoted Trafficante as saying "that Kennedy was going to be hit."

— Roselli had also suggested that the mob had ordered Jack Ruby to kill Oswald to prevent any disclosure of the Trafficante connection. One of Ruby's underworld associates, the memo reports, "indicates that in 1959 Jack Ruby traveled to Cuba and visited Santos Trafficante in jail." The same source also reported that "Ruby and Roselli had meetings in Miami several months prior to the assassination."

— A witness had told committee investigators that Ruby introduced her to Oswald at a Dallas nightclub two weeks before the assassination. She "had been afraid to come forth with her information," according to the memo, because another woman disappeared after she mentioned seeing Oswald at Ruby's nightclub. But the long-silent witness "is now willing to testify."

— The Warren Commission met behind closed doors on January 27, 1964, to discuss "evidence" that Oswald had been a \$200-a-month FBI informant up to the time of the assassination. The evidence came from two "independent" and "reliable" sources. The commission's general counsel, J. Lee Rankin, took this up with the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who categorically denied any relationship between Oswald and the FBI. Reports the memo: "The Warren Commission decided that rather than embarrass J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI they would not pursue the evidence."

— A credible witness has told House investigators that he met Oswald in Dallas shortly before Kennedy was killed. The witness swore that Oswald was in the company of a CIA agent whom

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the witness had known for years by the name of Morris Bishop. According to the memo, Oswald was also seen leaving the Dallas office of Alpha 66, an anti-Castro organization founded and funded by Bishop.

— A Dallas woman, named Sylvia Odio, reported that she had been visited by anti-Castro Cubans. They introduced her to an American, whom she later recognized as Oswald. The Cubans told her that the American was trying to persuade anti-Castro groups "to kill President

Kennedy because of Kennedy's reaction to the Bay of Pigs invasion." Not long afterward, Kennedy was shot. But the FBI misrepresented the woman's story to the Warren Commission. The memo alleges. This report "of what the Bureau knew to be patently false," declares the memo, "requires further investigation."

— The memo cites photographs and stories linking Oswald to members of a paramilitary, anti-Castro unit known as the "No Name Key

Group." Some of the photos show "CIA agents assigned to train the Cuban exiles and soldiers of fortune." Some members of the group were traced to Dallas shortly before the Kennedy assassination.

— The committee has a cryptic Nov. 8, 1963 note allegedly written by Oswald to a Mr. Hunt. Oswald requests "information requesting my position ... before any steps are taken by me or anyone else." The memo suggests that the mysterious Hunt

might be Watergate's E. Howard Hunt, who had worked closely with anti-Castro Cubans.

Footnote: FBI Director Clarence Kelley has told us that all 69 summaries were provided to the commission. Kelley also said the bureau furnished the commission with all pertinent information about potential informants, including the Cuban Sylvia Odio. The CIA had not commented by the time we went to print.

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